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## Oakland Blog

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### As financial crisis for public schools worsens, OUSD cuts almost 90% of its budget for Adult Education

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Hida Vioria (center), teaches an ESL class at Oakland International High School. Sena Alhmmre, her son Salah Hasan, Naw Htoo, Sotay Kong, Maryem Khamush and Shadia Balouch are able to take the class because they have children or family members at the school

As parents, students and teachers at Oakland schools grapple with the school board's recent decision to close five elementary schools, the Adult and Career Education program in the district has already come to terms with cuts that closed two campuses and decimated the program's funding.

Last spring, the Oakland Unified School District, facing budget cuts from the state as well as its ongoing debt resulting from the 2003 state takeover, voted to make substantial cuts to its Adult and Career Education program. According to Chris Nelson, the program's administrator, OUSD has diverted \$10.7 million, approximately 90 percent of Adult Education's budget, for the 2011-12 school year.

"It's very unfortunate," said Nelson. "It's devastating for us, as teachers, as administrators. We just know that the need is there."

A few years ago, the OUSD offered a full high school diploma option for adult learners, operated two campuses and served close to 2,000 students. Adult students could take classes much like those offered in traditional district schools in topics like history, English or math. Edward Shands Adult School used to host graduation ceremonies where students received high school diplomas, not just GED's.

At the time, said Nelson, the program looked like it would keep growing. Many of the classes the

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district offered for adults were of great use to Oakland's growing immigrant and refugee population, like English as a Second Language or citizenship classes. Because they were free, they were very popular. "Back in 2009, we were going to be the biggest that we ever were. We just kept expanding," said Nelson.

Read the full story by Mariel Waloff at [OaklandNorth.net](#)

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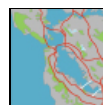
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